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Democrats With Doubts

*Administration Leaders Outdo G.O.P.
In Criticism of U.S. Foreign Policies*

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 25— President Johnson, like President Kennedy, spoke only yesterday of the need to adjust more rapidly to a world in which war is unthinkable. The day before, Adlai E. Stevenson disclosed the efforts of many here to lay the groundwork for a new yielding of sovereignty to the United Nations, to give it the power to tax for peace-keeping operations.

The Republicans suggested foreign policy as a battleground, but the Democrats, as Senator J. W. Fulbright of Arkansas demonstrated again today, have been firing all the big guns—against themselves. The Republicans now storming the White House might have been expected to condemn present policies as bankrupt, antiquated or injurious, but so far it has been the Democrats in the Administration and Congress who are insisting that the world is changing even faster than they are.

Thus it was left to Senator Fulbright to declare that the policy on Cuba is in a shambles, that Fidel Castro is not really very important, that democracy is not the equivalent of free enterprise or the two-party system and that the United States could survive an agreement to "negotiate" about the Panama Canal.

Similarly, it was Secretary of State Dean Rusk who pleaded for a new sophistication in appraising different Communist regimes—long before his department fully practiced what he preached. It was Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and his subordinates who discovered that the country might remain safe and still cut one-fourth of its \$50 billion military budget in the next few years.

China, Vietnam and Aid

It was a recently retired Assistant Secretary of State, Roger Hillsman Jr., who first proposed a little more realism in dealing with Communist China. It was the Senate majority leader, Mike Mansfield of Montana, who demanded some serious thought about negotiations in Vietnam. It was David E. Bell, the foreign aid director—supported vigorously today by Mr. McNamara—who charged that the dwindling aid program was jeopardizing national security.

This incomplete catalogue should suffice to show that this is not a case of the Democrats' splitting into new factions or the Executive finding all fault in Congress or vice versa. Many responsible men are agreeing and disagreeing on different issues at different times.

What they share is a general sense of uneasiness about the attitudes and policies of the past, including their own very recent past.

A Haunting Thought

Haunting most of the men who guide United States foreign policy is the feeling that on one question or another opportunities are slipping by because their own perception and the mood of the country are years behind the times.

Many of them have long regarded Cuba as more of a nuisance than a menace, but real or imagined fear of controversy at home has led them to talk for narrowmindedness or the as if seven million Cubans were more important than the 215 million other Latin Americans. Moreover, those who favor using blacks and whites of the cold trade with Cuba as bait for war that if they believe the Premier Castro's good conduct have never dared to speak out.

Dozens of officials here believe that Communist China will soon be admitted to the United Nations and that only bold and timely action can save a place for Nationalist China. Some think they know how to handle the problem, but they are afraid to speak up.

As the East-West contest simmers down, many here believe that the real crisis of the sixties will be in the failure of the world's industrial north to respond to the challenge and the need of the undeveloped south. But the north remains obsessed with its own economic problems, and American aid and trade policies toward the new nations are increasingly modest.

Fears Are Whispered

On issue after issue, Washington's secret fears can be heard in whispers until this man or that takes the Fulbright path to a statement of conscience.

At times the purpose is merely to blame Congress for narrowmindedness or the Executive for stubbornness. But increasingly it is also to say to those who think only in the present course is radical, they ought to reflect on the policies that respected men wish they were free to pursue.

Thus, instead of election-year celebration of the missile-crisis victory in 1962 and the nuclear test treaty of 1963, the Democrats are publicly showing an unusual amount of introspection and self-appraisal in 1964.